

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING A COMPLAINT BY A  
PRISONER UNDER CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, 42 U.S.C. § 1983**

NOTICE: The law has changed! The Prisoners Litigation Reform Act requires prisoners to exhaust available administrative remedies before filing a suit with respect to the conditions of confinement or the effects of action by government officials on the lives of persons confined in prison. In addition, the Act requires a prisoner to pay a **\$350.00 filing fee**, although the fee may be paid in installments.

**These forms are not to be used for filing a Petition for Writ or Habeas Corpus, or to challenge the validity of a state conviction for a criminal offense.**

Enclosed are four copies of a Complaint form with one Application to Proceed In Forma Pauperis and Affidavit, an Explanation of Filing Fees and Proceeding In Forma Pauperis, an Authorization to Release Institutional Account Information and To Pay Filing Fee, and three U. S. Marshal Process and Receipt Forms.

1. Your Complaint can be brought in this Court only if one or more of the named defendants are located within the Southern District of West Virginia (counties south of and including Wood, Wirt, Roane, Clay, Nicholas and Greenbrier), or if your claim arose in this District. Further, you must file a separate complaint for each claim that you have unless they are all related to the same incident or issue.
2. You must file an original complaint plus one copy of the complaint for each defendant you name. Use 8-1/2 X 11 inch paper. For example, if you name two defendants, you must file the original and two copies of the complaint. You should also keep an additional copy of the complaint for your own records. All copies of the complaint must be identical to the original. The original complaint must bear an original signature from each plaintiff. Your complaint must be legibly written or typewritten and you are required to give facts. **THE COMPLAINT SHOULD NOT CONTAIN LEGAL ARGUMENTS OR CITATIONS.** The plaintiff or plaintiffs must include his/her inmate registration number. If you need additional space to answer a question, you may use the reverse side of the form or an additional blank page.
3. If you have **\$350.00**, send a check or money order for **\$350.00** per complaint payable to "Clerk, U. S. District Court". If you are unable to pay the **\$350.00** filing fee, complete and sign an Application to Proceed in Forma Pauperis and Affidavit for each plaintiff (see Explanation of Filing Fees and Proceeding In Forma Pauperis).
4. Complete and sign one U. S. Marshal Process and Receipt Form for each defendant named in the complaint.
5. When all these forms are completed, mail them to:

Clerk, United States District Court  
Sidney L. Christie Federal Building  
845 Fifth Avenue, Room 101  
Huntington, WV 2570
6. Documents certified as true under penalty of perjury do not need to be notarized. See 28 U.S.C. § 1746.